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**Montana Attorney General Tim Fox's Remarks**  
**Press conference – Missoula County agreements on sexual assault**  
**June 10, 2014**

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Good morning, and thank you for joining us for this important announcement. I want to begin by thanking my colleagues and their offices for what I believe to be an important additional step toward our collective efforts to make Missoula a safer, friendlier, and more just place in which to live, work, and play. The last couple of years have put Missoula and Montana in the spotlight in ways that have unfortunately not always been viewed as favorable. However, with today's announcement, and the principled agreement reached between the Missoula County Attorney's office and my office, I believe that we have made, and will make, great strides in addressing Montana challenges with Montana solutions.

First, I want to thank all of our local law enforcement and legal partners in Missoula for their ongoing work and fine public safety record. The University of Montana Administration and the Missoula Police Department have worked hard for years to address the societal problem of sexual assault, and they've redoubled their efforts in recent years. The Missoula County Attorney's office, led by Fred Van Valkenburg, takes this issue very seriously and, as you have heard today, the dedicated public servants in Fred's office are committed to doing substantially more in the coming years to address sexual assault crimes, and victim services.

As you all know, it takes substantial resources to address public safety challenges in any community, and I want to thank the Missoula County Commissioners, Jean Curtiss, Bill Carey, and Michele Landquist, for their unwavering support for crime prevention and crime victim's rights.

We also stand here today with our federal partners, and in particular Mike Cotter and the United States Attorney's office, and Jocelyn Samuels, Mark Kappelhoff, and Jonathan Smith from the United States Department of Justice in Washington, D.C. My office works with the United States Department of Justice every day in many ways to fight crime in Montana and indeed throughout America. We appreciate the cooperation and assistance we receive from USDOJ, and we look forward to working with our federal partners in the future.

In this day and age, it is often too easy for public officials to focus on our disagreements and to allow those disagreements to get in the way of working together to serve the public good. There have been many disagreements that have come to light in recent years over how to best combat the problem of sexual assault in our communities. Prosecutors grapple with these issues every day, and are faced with many obstacles, ambiguities, and uncertainties that must be overcome before justice can be

served. Every criminal case is different. There's no cookie-cutter way to investigate or prosecute every case. But despite the difficulties in prosecuting sexual assault, every public official here today agrees that we can and should do everything we can to prevent, investigate, and prosecute sexual assault to the best of our abilities.

To that end, USDOJ and Missoula County have set aside their disagreements and, at the direction and control of my office, we will now focus on our future efforts to promote justice, treat victims of sexual assault in a caring and nondiscriminatory manner, and ultimately to enhance those attributes that already make Missoula County one of the best places in America to live or visit. And, as Montana's Attorney General, my commitment to public safety is not limited to just Missoula County. I've directed my staff to redouble our efforts to train Montana's prosecutors in the area of sexual assault crimes, and we've already conducted several of training seminars, with some attendees saying it's the best training they've ever received. With the assistance of the Missoula County Attorney's office, and prosecutors across Montana, we intend to do all we can to protect victims of sexual assaults and to make Montana and even safer place.

Thank you again to those who assisted in crafting the solutions you are witnessing today.

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